

Message Text

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NEA:ALATHERTONJR.

S/S: MR. SEBASTIAN

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TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

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FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS, US, EG

SUBJECT: FAHMY'S CONCERN ABOUT ISRAELI INTENTIONS

REFS: (A) CAIRO 16510; (B) SECTO 31034

1. YOU WILL HAVE RECEIVED BY SEPARATE TELEGRAM POINTS TO MAKE TO FAHMY IN ANSWER TO AN EARLIER QUERY. IN THE LIGHT OF HIS FURTHER CONCERNS (REF A) YOU SHOULD ADD THE FOLLOWING POINTS FROM ME:

-- REGARDING MY LETTERS TO ASAD AND SADAT, I OF COURSE WROTE TO BOTH LEADERS ON THE SAME OCCASION, WHICH WAS SO FULL OF CONSEQUENCE FOR MY RELATIONS WITH THEM. BEYOND THAT, HOWEVER, MY LETTER TO SADAT WAS IN A FAR MORE PERSONAL VEIN, REFLECTIVE OF MY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. THE LETTERS WERE CERTAINLY NOT IDENTICAL.

-- I AGREE WITH FAHMY'S VIEW THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE NO WISH TO BE DRAGGED BY THE PALESTINIANS INTO A CONFLICT WITH
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ISRAEL. I ALSO AGREE THAT ISRAEL HAS NO INTEREST IN

PRECIPITATING HOSTILITIES WITH SYRIA. WHAT MAY HAPPEN OVER THE LONGER RUN DEPENDS ON SO MANY FACTORS THAT I AM RELUCTANT TO SPECULATE. IF THERE IS ANY CONCERN THAT ISRAEL MIGHT TRY TO QUOTE 0LACKEN THE U.S. IMAGE IN THE ARAB

WORLD UNQUOTE, IT IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THAT WE KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

-- I THINK THE SAUDIS ARE UNNECESSARILY CONCERNED IN BELIEVING THAT THE ISRAELI REINFORCEMENT ON THEIR NORTHERN BORDER SIGNALS INTENTION TO ATTACK LEBANON. WE BELIEVE THE ISRAELI MOVE WAS INTENDED TO EMPHASIZE ISRAELI CONCERN ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTH OF LEBANON AND ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SYRIAN FORCES BEING MOVED INTO THAT AREA.

-- FAHMY MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN A BRIEF SUMMARY OF LANE'S TALK WITH SARKIS ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF SOUTHERN LEBANON ON NOVEMBER 29. SARKIS SAID THERE WERE IN HIS OPINION NO LEBANESE FORCES THAT COULD MAINTAIN SECURITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON FOR THE NEAR FUTURE. THE CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS ALONG THE BORDER WERE TOO WEAK AND THEIR USE IN A BROADER AREA WOULD BE TOO DIVISIVE. MEANWHILE, THERE WERE FIVE SEPARATE LEBANESE FORCES THAT HAD TO BE MELDED INTO ONE FORCE BEFORE BEING USED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN SECURITY.

-- SARKIS WAS CONCERNED THAT IF HE DID NOT USE ARAB SECURITY FORCE UNITS TO CLOSE THE PORT OF TYRE TO THE PALESTINIANS AS A RESUPPLY ROUTE THE WHOLE PACIFICATION PLAN WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED. HE ALSO THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT TO USE ASF ELEMENTS IN MAINTAINING CONTROL OVER PALESTINIAN CONCENTRATIONS IMMEDIATELY SOUTH OF SIDON AND IN NABATIYAH.

-- SARKIS UNDERSTANDS ISRAELI SENSITIVITY ABOUT FURTHER

SOUTHWARD MOVEMENT OF THE ASF, BUT BELIEVES, NONETHELESS, THAT THESE LIMITED MISSIONS FOR THE ASF IN THE SOUTH ARE IMPORTANT. (CONTRARY TO FAHMY'S IMPRESSION, THERE ARE SO FAR AS WE KNOW NO SYRIAN CONTINGENTS IN TYRE OR
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NABATIYAH.)

-- WE WILL CONTINUE OUR CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELIS, SYRIANS, AND SARKIS, TO HELP WORK OUT A SOLUTION TO THE SECURITY PROBLEM IN THE REGION. AS YOU HAVE TOLD FAHMY, WE WILL IN THE COURSE OF THESE CONTACTS CONTINUE TO URGE RESTRAINT ON THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. ROBINSON

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